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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 AMMAN 003971

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NP/PTR - Vazquez, Jarvis  
STATE ALSO FOR NP/ECC - Groen, Van Son, Gabryszewski  
STATE PASS USAID  
STATE PASS National Science Foundation  
ENERGY FOR NNSA/Fitzgerald and for Perry  
INTERIOR FOR USGS/International  
COMMERCE FOR NIST  
COMMERCE ALSO FOR D. Creed  
COGUARD FOR USCG Activities/MIO Europe M. BEE  
US CUSTOMS FOR P. Walker, W. Lawrence  
BAGHDAD FOR Smallwood

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [XF](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: Iraqi Scientists Work on Grant Proposals at  
DOE/ASTF Workshop

1. (SBU) Summary: Over thirty Iraqi scientists worked with international collaborators on developing scientific and business-related grant proposals during a May 16-18 proposal-writing workshop in Amman. The workshop was sponsored by the Department of Energy (DOE) in cooperation with the UAE-based NGO the Arab Science and Technology Foundation (ASTF), and drew on the resources of DOE's Sandia National Laboratory. Incorporating Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) community into this project was discussed on the margins. End summary.

DOE and Sandia Lab Work with Regional NGO and UNESCO

2. (U) The Department of Energy's delegation to the Amman workshop was led by Monte Mallin, Director of the Office of Global Security Engagement and Cooperation in DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). The genesis of the program started with DOE's Cooperative Monitoring Center operated by Sandia National Laboratory and funded by NNSA. Sandia works with the Sharjah, United Arab Emirates-based NGO the Arab Science and Technology Foundation (ASTF) as a regional partner. UNESCO collaborates as well with DOE and ASTF in organizing this engagement program for Iraqi scientists.

Focus on Health, Environment, Ag, Water, Materials

3. (U) The purpose of the workshop was three-fold: 1) join Iraqi scientists with international collaborators to develop joint research proposals, 2) train trainers who will travel in Iraq to educate the academic and research communities on how to write grant proposals, and 3) assist Iraqi scientists who have a business-related idea to develop a business plan and find potential investors. Proposals focus on five areas: health, environment, water, agriculture and advanced materials. For further information, please refer to ASTF's website at <http://www.astf.net/site/zone/zone.asp?ogzid=10000>.

State's Virtual Science Library Makes Journals Available

4. (U) Dr. Alex Dehgan from NEA's Regional Affairs Office spoke to the participants about State's Iraqi Virtual Science Library, a project to make scientific journals available on-line to Iraqi scientists. The Virtual Science Library will become available soon, said Dehgan. This announcement was received warmly by the Iraqi participants. For them, these journals represent welcome and otherwise difficult-to-obtain sources of information on current science and research.

Excellent Iraqi, Jordanian and International Participation

5. (U) ASTF's Baghdad office played a key role in successfully publicizing this workshop to the Iraqi S&T community. ASTF attracted participants from the University of Baghdad, Al-Nahrain University, the University of Mosul, Basrah University, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Water Resources, and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

6. (U) Jordan's Higher Council for Science and Technology, which combines functions of the U.S. National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), co-sponsored the workshop. They "took out their checkbook," according to one DOE organizer, to pay for local expenses, and they arranged for Princess Summaya, a member of the royal family, to speak at the opening session. These were significant commitments since, according to DOE participants, this is the first time that an Arab government has directly and publicly supported S&T

engagement activities with Iraq.

17. (U) Both Sandia and ASTF did outreach to find international collaborators who could work with the Iraqi participants to develop specific research proposals. DOE was very pleased with the high quality of the international participants, mostly academics and researchers, who came from Jordan, Egypt, UK, Kuwait, Sweden, the USA, Lebanon, Australia, Ireland, Germany and Sudan.

#### A Few Bumps in the Road from Iraq, Literally

18. (U) The workshop successfully created international partnerships that will bring Iraqi scientists back into the international community and help to rebuild Iraqi's scientific infrastructure. There were a few minor problems: long car rides from Iraq, problems at the border with Jordan, and an understandably slow start as participants took time to get to know each other and to focus on specific research topics. ASTF agreed with the USG assessment that these serve as valuable "lessons learned," particularly as planning gets underway for a follow-on conference in September, tentatively scheduled to be held in the UAE.

#### Next Steps: Review Proposals, Funding in September in UAE

19. (U) Next steps are for the collaborative teams to further refine their proposals and begin to seek out sources of funding so that scientists can start working immediately on projects found to be scientifically viable and which contribute to Iraqi scientific reconstruction. A potential problem is that many international grant cycles are a year or longer, creating a short-term funding gap. The follow-up conference in September will seek to identify sources of funding. Final versions of the proposals started these last few days in Amman will also be presented at this conference.

#### Generation Gap in Scientists Will Take Decade to Fill

10. (U) There is another structural issue in the Iraqi science community that will take years to address: the generation gap. The dark years under Saddam deprived a generation of Iraqis of international S&T experience. As a result, there is an older generation of well-trained Iraqi scientists, but a significant gap behind them. It will take a decade or more to fill that gap, since young scientists need that long to get the necessary training and experience to engage with the colleagues around the world. It is clear that the Iraqi scientists wish to reestablish their contact with the international scientific community after years of isolation under Saddam. This thought was expressed repeatedly by a large number of Iraqi participants.

#### Discussions on WMD Scientists

11. (SBU) Informal, positive discussions were held on the margins between DOE delegation head Mallin and ASTF leadership about incorporating Iraq's former WMD scientific community into existing and future project proposals. These discussions identified possible options, consistent with State/DOE discussions prior to the conference. Mallin will bring these ideas back to Washington and will meet with DOE's NA-24 leadership and DOS/NP/PTR to debrief. (Note: Three scientists associated with Iraq's WMD program are already involved in the ASTF project, with opportunities to expand such participation. End note.)

12. (U) Comment: This is a practical, results-oriented project with modest funding that will work to get the Iraqi science community back on its feet and focused on sustainable funding. It will make a contribution to the rebuilding of Iraqi's scientific infrastructure and will provide a valuable means to promote international transparency and cooperation with Iraq's scientific cadre.

13. (U) This cable was cleared by Mr. Mallin.

HALE